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Insights into hours worked, November 2021

Released 16/12/2021

Source: [Labour Force, Australia, November 2021](#)

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The ABS previously indicated its intention to cease publishing this article every month after the May 2021 issue (on 17 June 2021), and to only publish future updates as needed. Given the Delta lockdowns and other restrictions, the ABS has continued to publish further articles each month and currently expects to until February 2022.

The November survey reference period was from 31 October to 13 November 2021. New South Wales, Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory had moved out of lockdowns prior to this period.

Hours worked and employment

Hours worked increased by 4.5% (in seasonally adjusted terms) between October and November 2021, while employment increased by 2.9% or 366,100 people.

Chart 1 shows changes in hours worked and employment, indexed to March 2020, while Chart 2 shows monthly changes in hours worked and employment since November 2017. They highlight the extent to which hours worked provide a more comprehensive indication of the extent of labour market impacts over the pandemic than employment, given some employed people temporarily have reduced hours or no work, without necessarily losing their jobs.

Chart 1: Hours worked and employment index, Seasonally adjusted (March 2020 = 100.0)



Source: Labour Force, Australia Tables 1 and 19

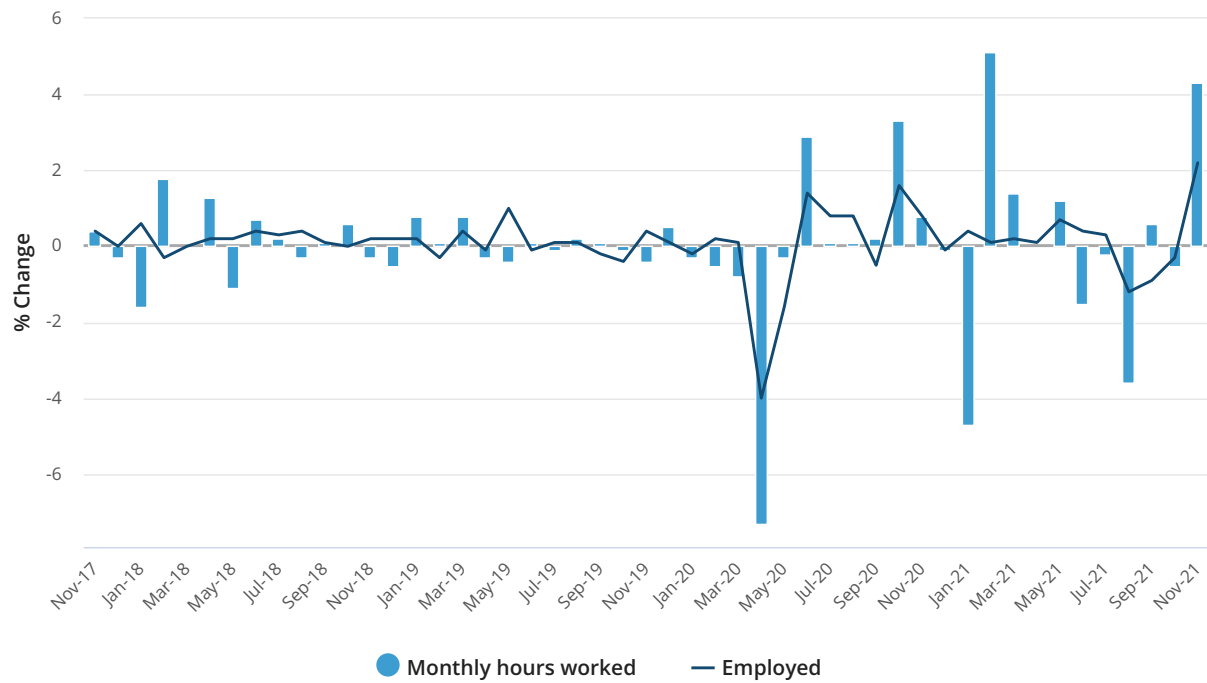
Chart 2: Monthly change in employment and hours worked, Seasonally adjusted



Source: Labour Force, Australia Tables 1 and 19

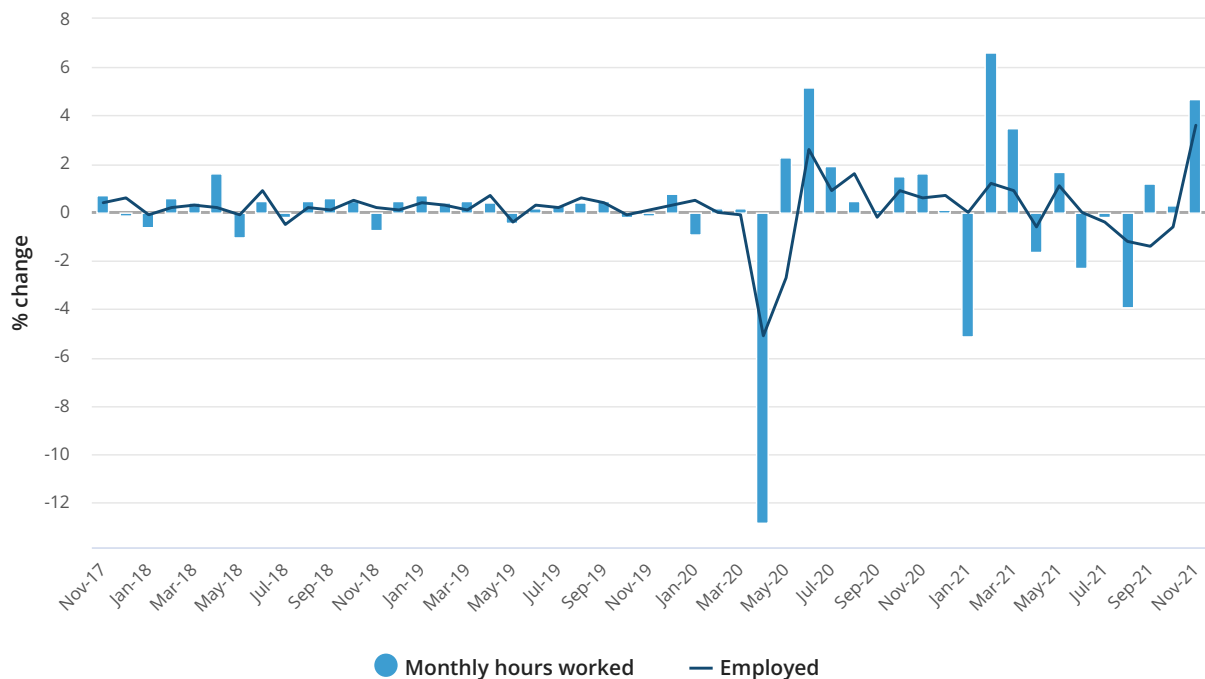
Changes in employment and hours worked for men and women

Table 2a: Monthly change in employment and hours worked, Males, Seasonally adjusted



Source: Labour Force, Australia Tables 1 and 19

Table 2b: Monthly change in employment and hours worked, Females, Seasonally adjusted



Source: Labour Force, Australia Tables 1 and 19

States and territories

Over the COVID period, hours worked have been impacted when jurisdictions move into and out of lockdowns and other restrictions. This was again evident in changes in hours worked across many of the states and territories in November.

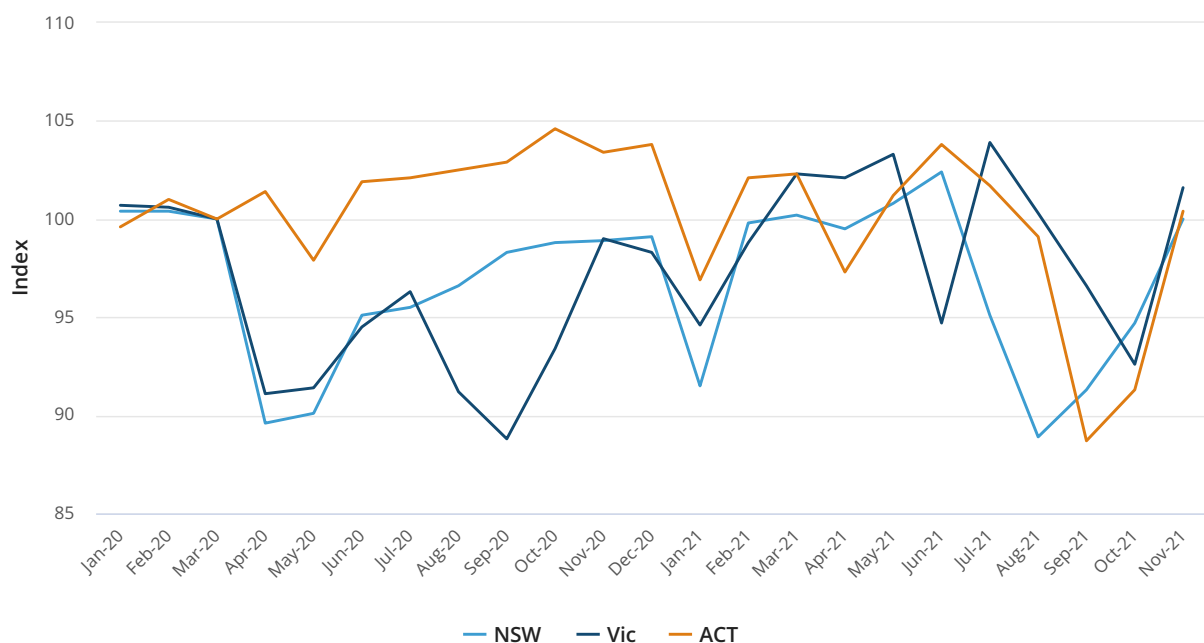
Monthly hours worked in New South Wales rose by 30.1 million hours (5.6%) between October and November. This increase brought hours worked to 0.8% below May 2021, before the Delta outbreak, and around the level in March 2020.

Monthly hours worked in Victoria increased by 41.2 million hours (9.7%) between October and November, following the 4.1% fall between September and October 2021. In November they were 1.7% lower than May 2021 and 1.6% higher than March 2020.

Monthly hours worked in the Australian Capital Territory increased by 2.9 million hours (10.0%) between October and November, following the 3.0% increase between September and October. In November they were 0.8% lower than May 2021 and 0.4% higher than March 2020.

Chart 3 shows the changes in monthly hours worked for New South Wales, Victoria and Australian Capital Territory indexed to March 2020.

Chart 3: Monthly hours worked index, selected states and territories, seasonally adjusted (March 2020 = 100)



Source: Labour Force, Australia Tables 19 and 19a

People working fewer hours

Chart 4 shows the number of people working fewer (or no) hours in November 2021:

- due to taking annual leave, holidays, flextime, or long service leave - which was 1,248,600 people
- due to economic reasons - which was 418,100 people. This was a decrease of 345,600

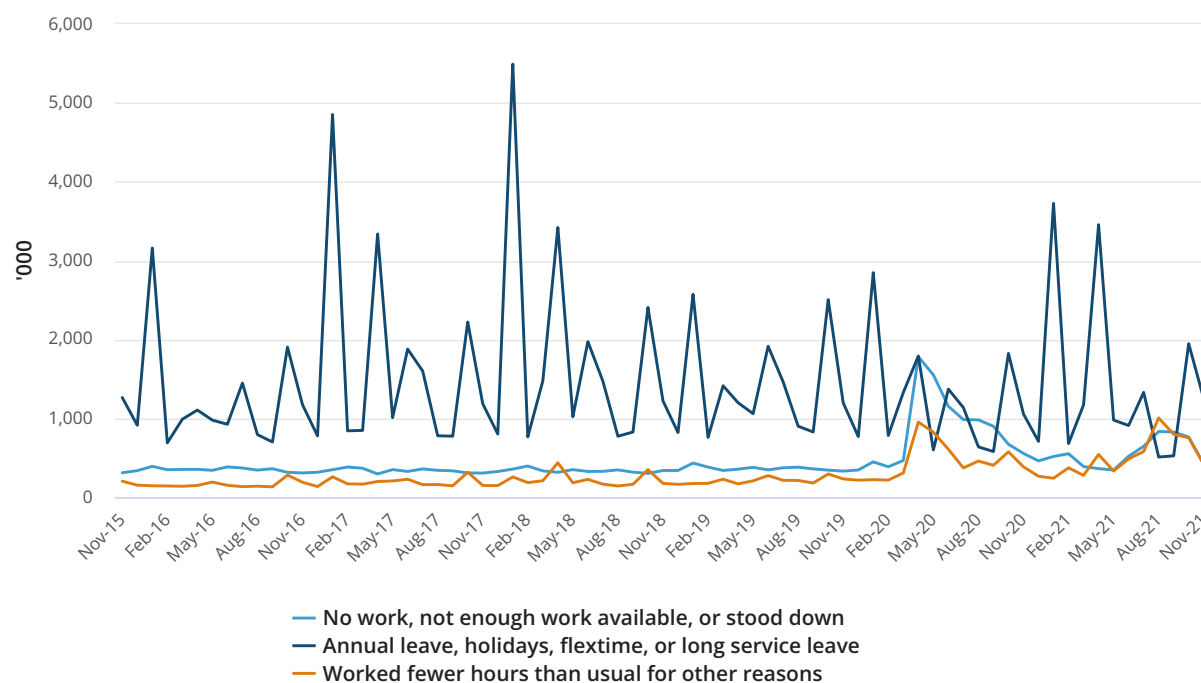
from October 2021

- due to other reasons - which was 417,800 people. This was a decrease of 336,200 from October 2021

When assessing the impacts of lockdowns, it is important to consider larger than seasonal changes in people reporting 'economic reasons' (that is, people reporting having no work, not enough work or being stood down) and 'other reasons'. People reporting other reasons has increased during periods of lockdowns, indicating that some respondents feel that the longstanding categories do not fully capture the complexity of the restrictions and/or that it is difficult for them to attribute the reasons to a single category.

In addition to economic reasons and other reasons, some people who are impacted by lockdowns may also report different reasons, such as taking annual leave or holidays or using flextime during the lockdown period. All reasons are available from data cubes EM2a and EM2b.

Chart 4: People working fewer than their usual hours, or no hours at all, Original

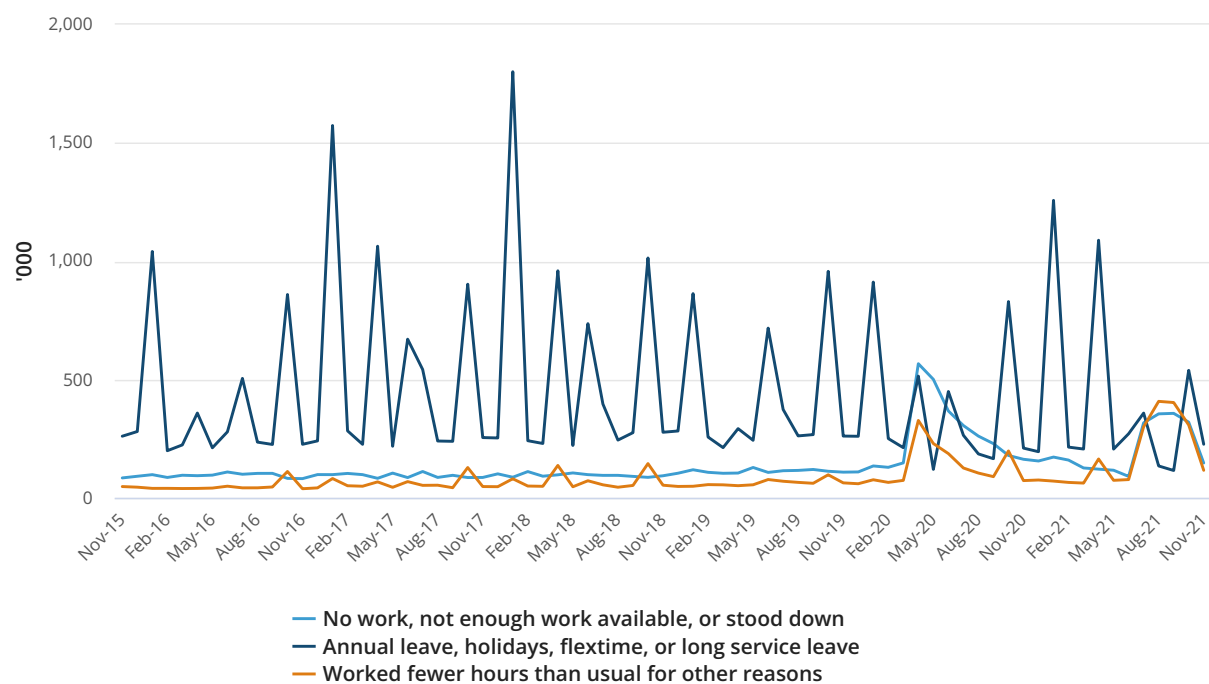


Source: Labour Force, Australia Data Cube EM2a

Chart 4a shows the number of people working fewer (or no) hours in November 2021 in New South Wales:

- due to taking annual leave, holidays, flextime, or long service leave - which was 226,300 people
- due to economic reasons - which was 147,100 people. This was a decrease of 172,800 from October 2021
- due to other reasons - which was 116,100 people. This was a decrease of 191,600 from October 2021

Chart 4a: People working fewer than their usual hours in New South Wales, Original



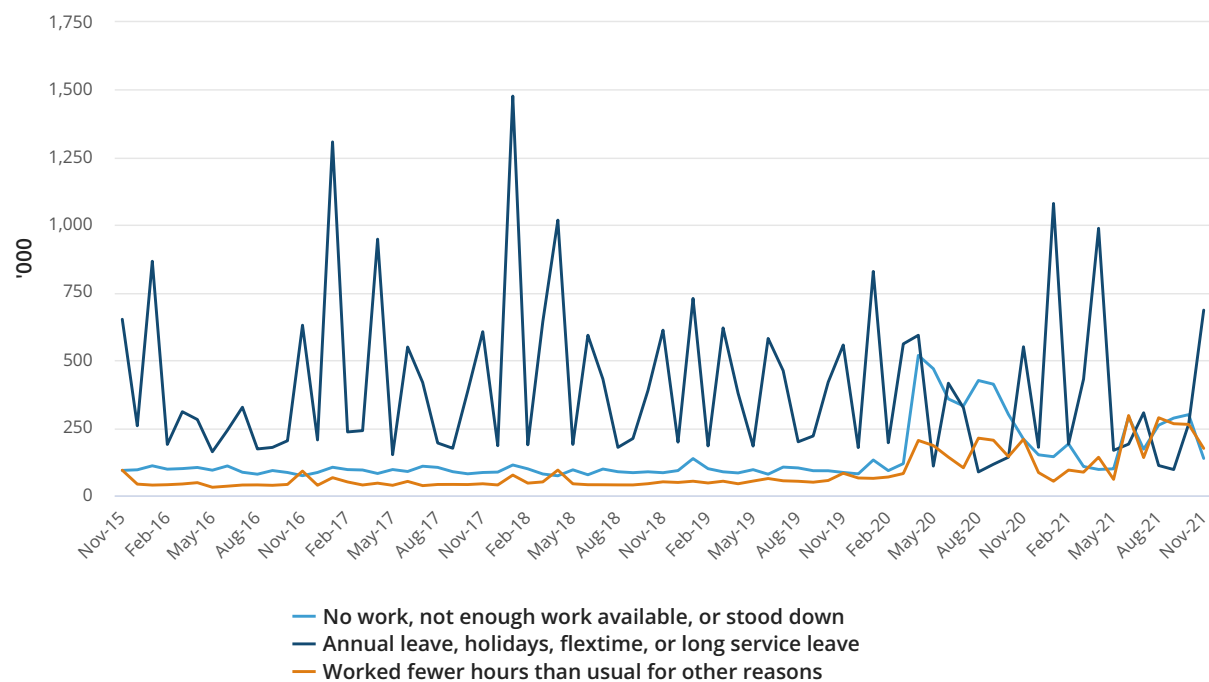
Source: Labour Force, Australia Data Cube EM2b

Chart 4b shows the number of people working fewer (or no) hours in November 2021 in Victoria:

- due to taking annual leave, holidays, flextime, or long service leave - which was 685,200 people. This was an increase of 420,900 from October 2021 due to Melbourne Cup public holiday in Victoria

- due to economic reasons - which was 136,700 people. This was a decrease of 162,000 from October 2021
- due to other reasons - which was 173,800 people. This was a decrease of 88,800 from October 2021

Chart 4b: People working fewer than their usual hours in Victoria, Original

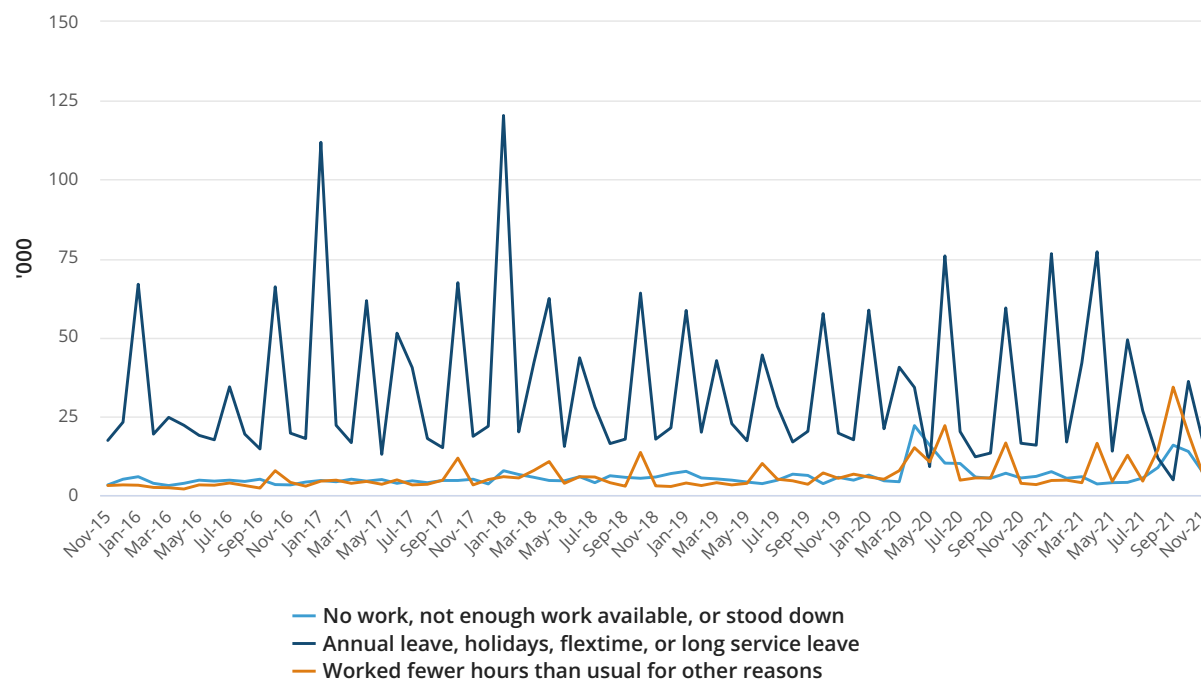


Source: Labour Force, Australia Data Cube EM2b

Chart 4c shows the number of people working fewer (or no) hours in November 2021 in the Australian Capital Territory:

- due to taking annual leave, holidays, flextime, or long service leave - which was 16,100 people
- due to economic reasons - which was 6,800 people. This was a decrease of 7,000 from October 2021
- due to other reasons - which was 6,000 people. This was a decrease of 13,500 from October 2021

Chart 4c: People working fewer than their usual hours in Australian Capital

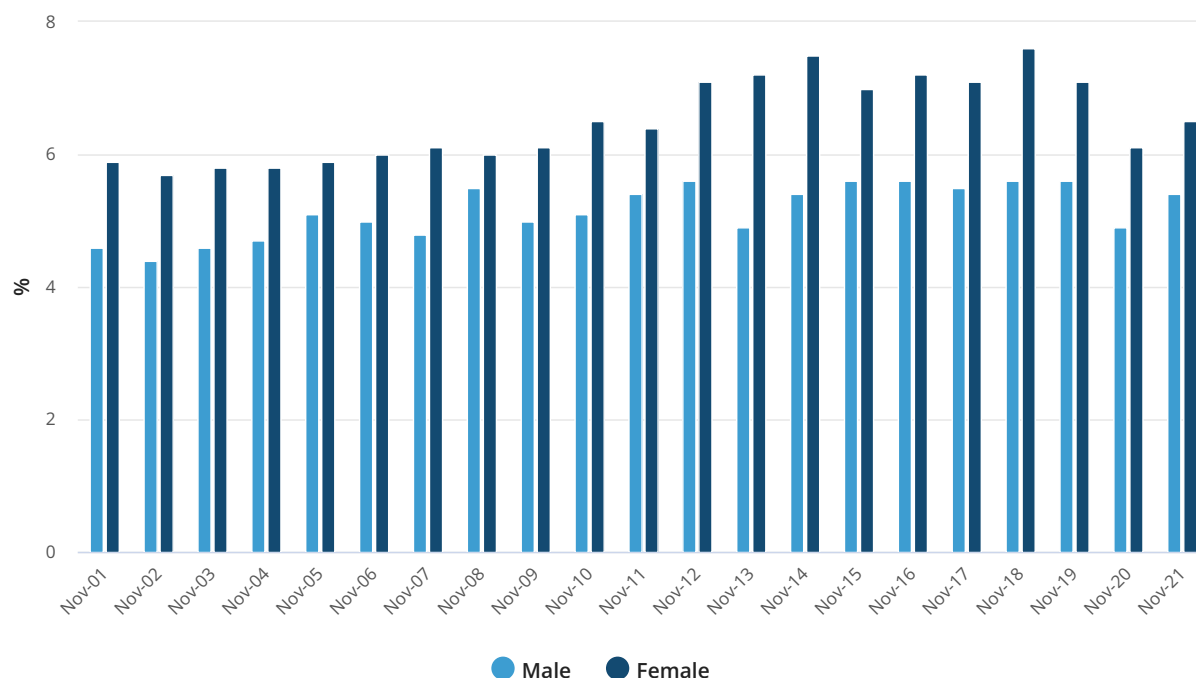


Source: Labour Force, Australia Data Cube EM2b

People working zero hours

Chart 5 shows the proportion of employed males and females who worked zero hours in November over the past 20 years. In November 2021, 5.9% of employed people in Australia worked zero hours (5.5% in New South Wales and 5.7% in Victoria).

Chart 5: Proportion of employed working zero hours, Original

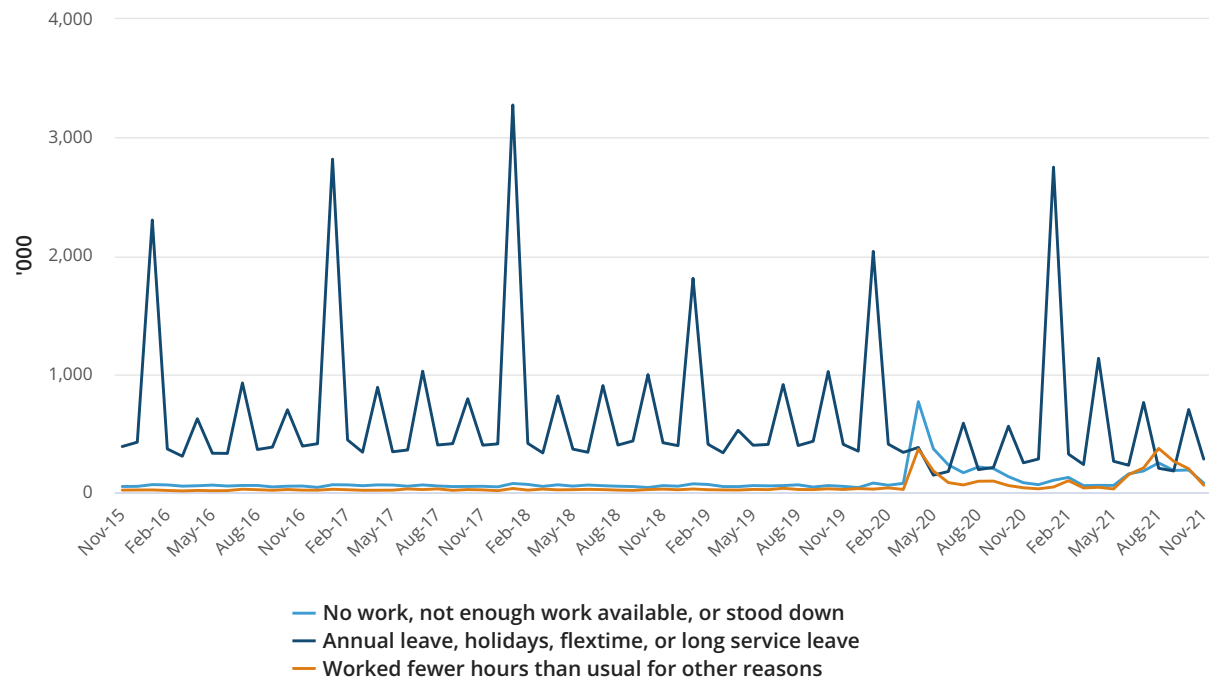


Source: Labour Force, Australia, Detailed Table 9

Chart 6 shows the number of people working zero hours for economic reasons, due to taking annual leave, holidays, flextime, or long service leave and due to other reasons. As with people working fewer hours, there is a distinct (although dampened over the COVID-19 period), seasonal pattern to people taking leave, with large increases each January and during school holiday periods. In November 2021:

- 281,200 employed people worked zero hours due to taking annual leave, holidays, flextime, or long service leave
- 78,500 employed people worked zero hours for economic reasons. This was a decrease of 110,400 from October 2021
- 60,000 employed people worked zero hours for other reasons. This was a decrease of 139,300 from October 2021

Chart 6: Employed people working zero hours, Original

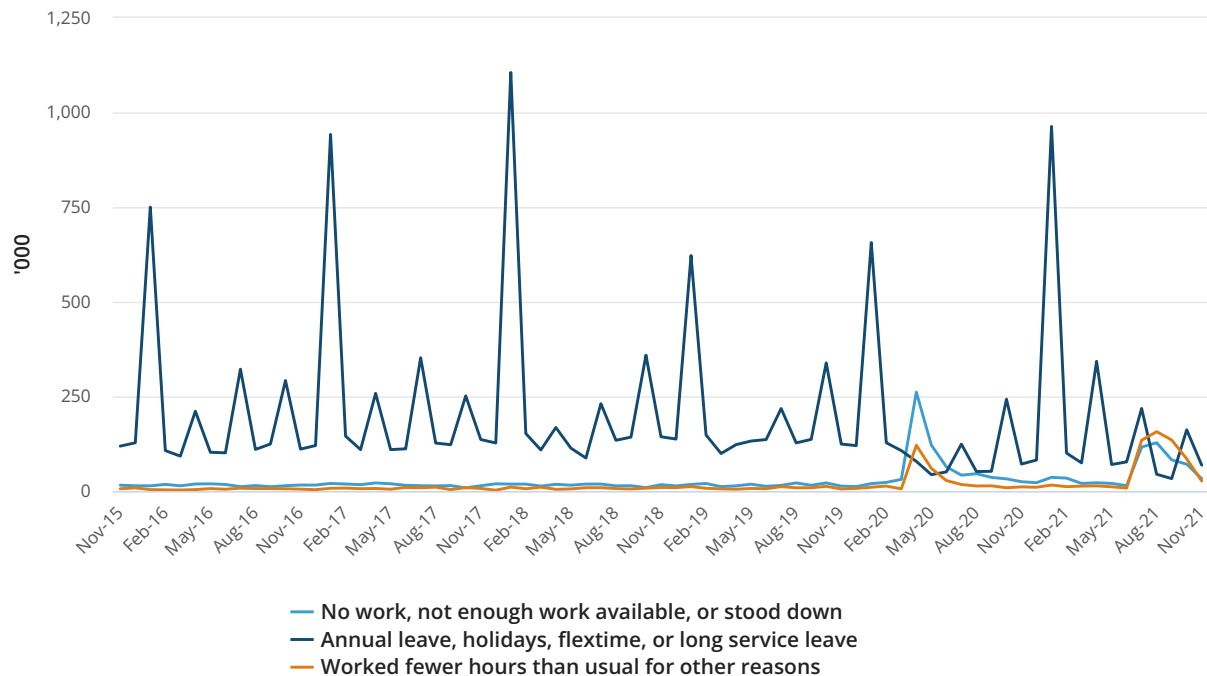


Source: Labour Force, Australia Data Cube EM2a

Chart 6a shows the number of employed people who worked zero hours in New South Wales in November 2021:

- due to taking annual leave, holidays, flextime, or long service leave - which was 68,300 people
- due to economic reasons - which was 32,600 people. This was a decrease of 38,200 from October 2021
- due to other reasons - which was 26,300 people. This was a decrease of 58,800 from October 2021

Chart 6a: Employed people working zero hours in New South Wales, Original

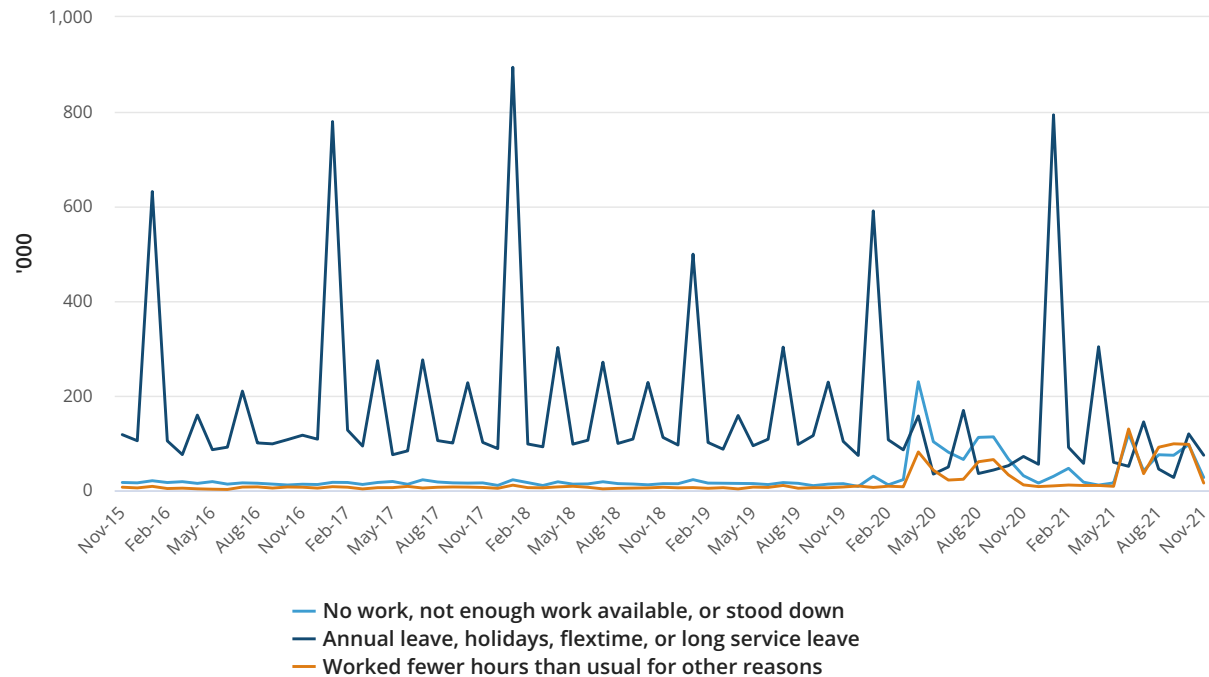


Source: Labour Force, Australia Data Cube EM2b

Chart 6b shows the number of employed people who worked zero hours in Victoria in November 2021:

- due to taking annual leave, holidays, flexitime, or long service leave - which was 74,200 people
- due to economic reasons - which was 27,100 people. This was a decrease of 69,500 from October 2021
- due to other reasons - which was 15,400 people. This was a decrease of 81,800 from October 2021

Chart 6b: Employed people working zero hours in Victoria, Original

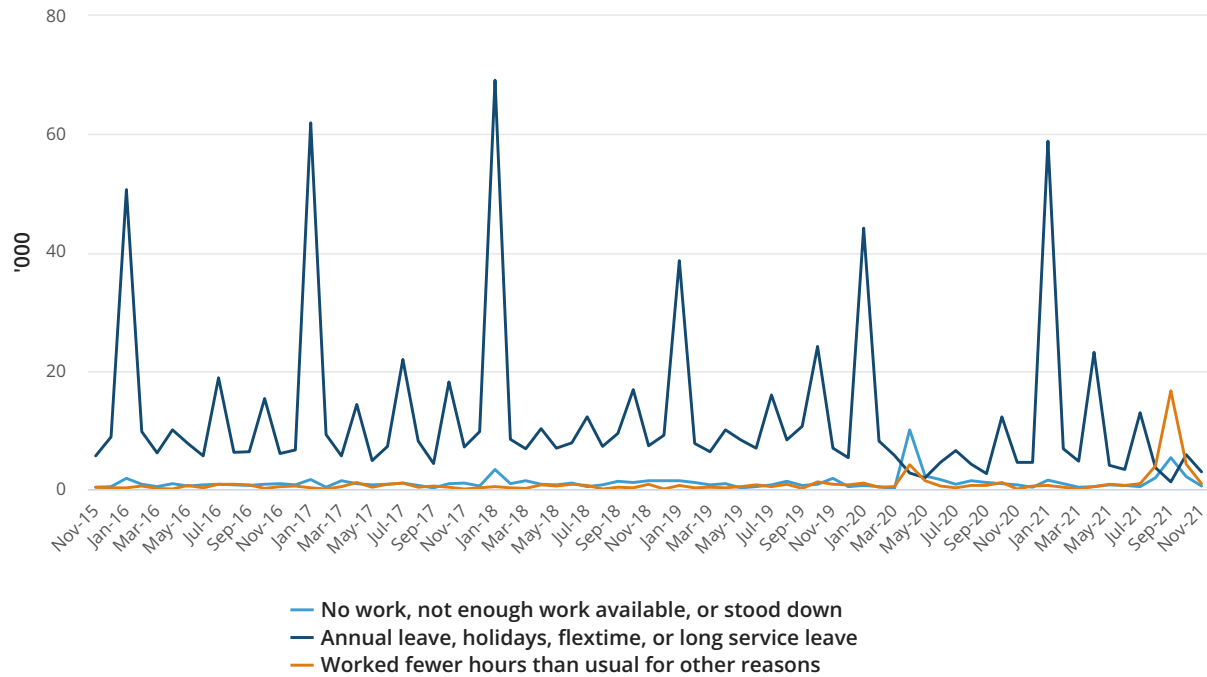


Source: Labour Force, Australia Data Cube EM2b

Chart 6c shows the number of employed people who worked zero hours in the Australian Capital Territory in November 2021:

- due to taking annual leave, holidays, flextime, or long service leave - which was 2,900 people
- due to economic reasons - which was 500 people. This was a decrease of 1,500 from October 2021
- due to other reasons - which was 900 people. This was a decrease of 3,300 from October 2021

Chart 6c: Employed people working zero hours in Australian Capital Territory, Original



Source: Labour Force, Australia Data Cube EM2b

For further information, email labour.statistics@abs.gov.au (<mailto:labour.statistics@abs.gov.au>).